



# NAUTICAL TERMS & NAVAL EXPRESSIONS

IN THIS SERIES OF INFOGRAPHICS, WE'LL EXPLORE THE ORIGIN OF SOME COMMON AND PECULIAR NAUTICAL TERMS AND EXPRESSIONS USED IN YOUR U.S. NAVY

## PORT

To the left of the centerline of a ship when facing forward. This side of the ship was referred to as *larboard* until 1846, derived from *load board*—the side of the ship where the load was carried. Larboard was often confused with starboard, so the term *port* was adopted.

## FORE

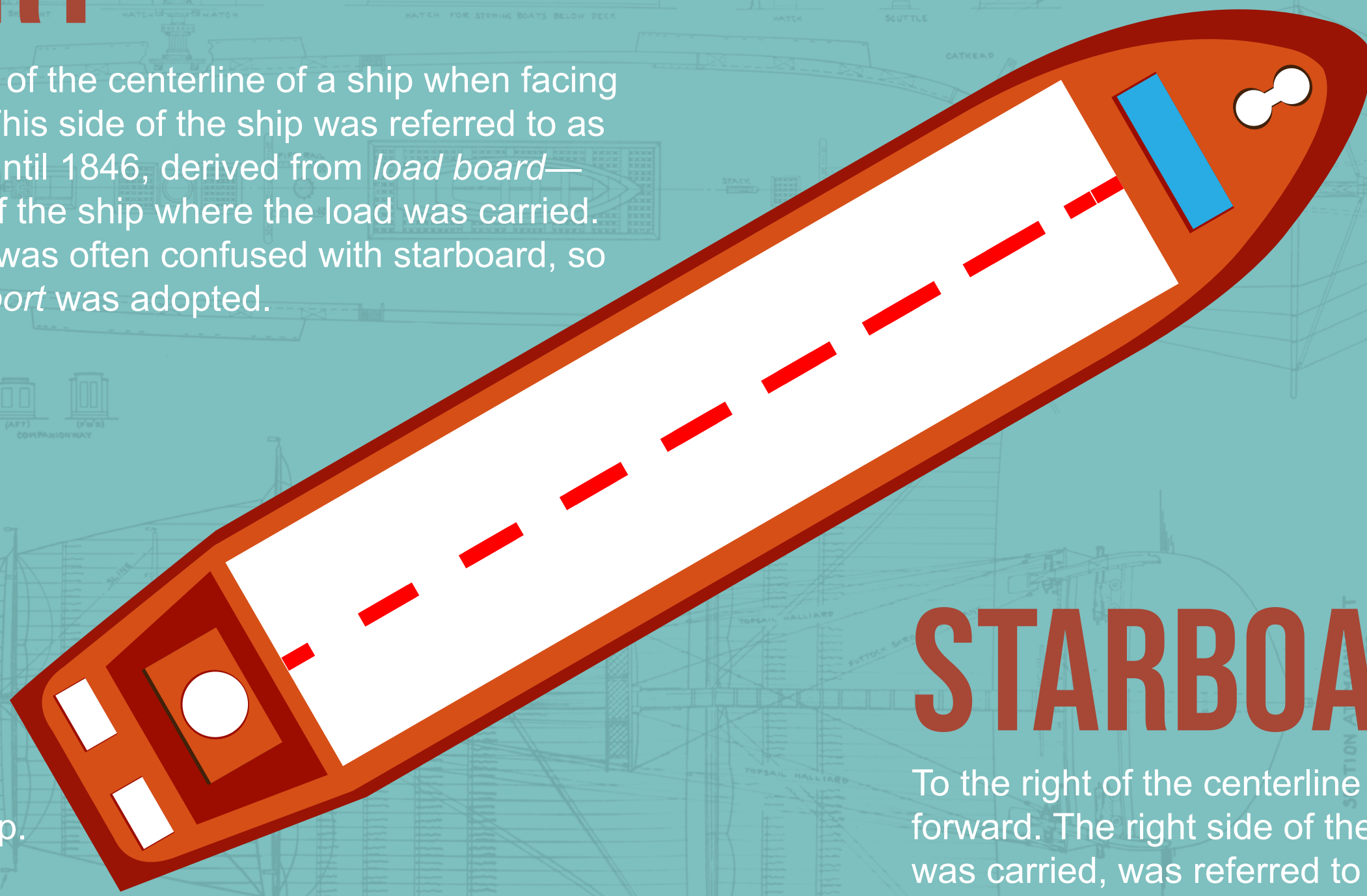
The forward part of the ship.

## AFT

In, near, or toward the stern, or rear, of the ship.

## STARBOARD

To the right of the centerline of a ship when facing forward. The right side of the ship, where the steering was carried, was referred to as the *steerboard*, from which the term *starboard* is derived.



## ANCHOR'S AWEIGH

When the anchor is clear of the sea bottom and the ship is no longer fastened to the land and is free to sail on its own. The word *aweigh* is derived from the Old English word *woeg*, meaning “to raise.”



## STEADY AS SHE GOES

To continue on whatever course the compass is pointing to at the time the command is given.



## FATHOM

A unit of depth equal to six feet. *Fathom* is derived from the Old English word *faethm*, meaning “to embrace.” Historically, fathom was the act of stretching two arms wide as a rough measurement of six feet.

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Sources: Naval History and Heritage Command; Naval Ceremonies, Customs, and Traditions Sixth Edition by Royal Connell and William Mack; Origin of Navy Terminology by Navy Internal Relations Activity; U.S. Navy Personnel Command; Oxford Dictionaries. Photos: Naval History and Heritage Command; Official U.S. Navy file photos, [www.navy.mil](http://www.navy.mil). Infographic by Naval History and Heritage Command Communication and Outreach Division.